



THE LOUISIANA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

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February 4, 2002

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SFRA Program Managers
USDA Forest Service, Southern Region
1720 Peachtree Road, NW
Atlanta, GA 30367

RE: Comments on the Draft Forest Resource Assessment

Dear John and David,

The Louisiana Forestry Association (LFA) is a statewide non-profit, trade association representing more than 3,000 forest landowners, loggers, and forest industry throughout Louisiana. Our purpose is to promote the health and productivity of Louisiana forests through the practice of sustainable forestry.

We commend you for your dedicated efforts in organizing and managing a diverse group of issues and researchers in developing the Southern Forest Resource Assessment (SFRA). The SFRA is a milestone in the long history of research on southern forests and significantly contributes to our understanding of forest conditions and trends in the region.

Much of what Louisiana, other southern states in the region, and the national forest products industry do to promote sustainable forestry goes unheralded and is not given much attention in the SFRA. Nevertheless, these efforts make a substantial contribution to the long-term health and productivity of the South's forests. LFA requests you include the various contributions of private landowners, loggers, industry, and academia to the sustainability and health of southern forests. Particularly noteworthy are contributions to state reforestation programs, development of Best Management Practices with state water quality agencies, and developing training programs for landowners, loggers, and industry in sustainable forestry principles.

LFA urges the Forest Service to prioritize its regular research programs to address future research needs rather than undertake any new initiatives directly based on this Assessment. We believe the Forest Service should direct its limited resources on improving and expanding data collection for the Forest Inventory Analysis and research areas that have a direct impact on sustainable forestry.

Thank you again for your extraordinary efforts with the SFRA and we appreciate your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

C. A. "Buck" Vandersteen
Executive Director